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NATURE



Herbarium

Rules!

by Mike Shchepanek
& Rob Waller

Illustrations by
Joe Ollman

Canada

Library Friends

*"The whole world here unlocks the experience
of the past to the builders of the future"*

—Inscription above east entrance to the Main Library building,
dedicated in 1929

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**Natural History Survey
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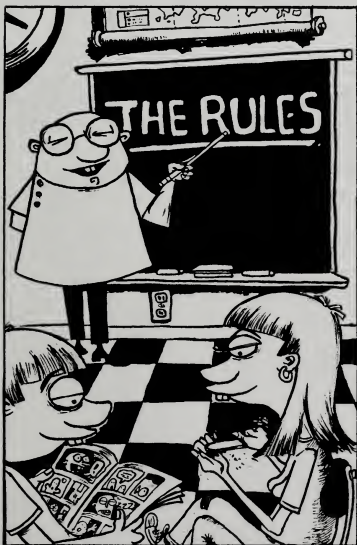
Welcome to the Herbarium

The Herbarium of the Canadian Museum of Nature contains 600,000 vascular plant specimens collected and preserved over the past two centuries. It offers an irreplaceable portrait of the plant kingdom in Canada.



The Rules

To realize its value, the Herbarium's specimens are made available for study. But as handling (or mishandling!) is the major cause of specimen deterioration, it is crucial for the long-term survival of the collection that the following guidelines be meticulously followed.





Entering the Herbarium

Come clean

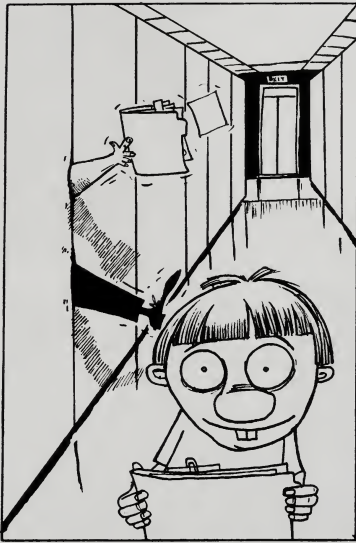
Don't bring food or drinks into the Herbarium. Don't smoke in the Herbarium. And don't bring in any plant specimens that have not been decontaminated.



At the Cabinets

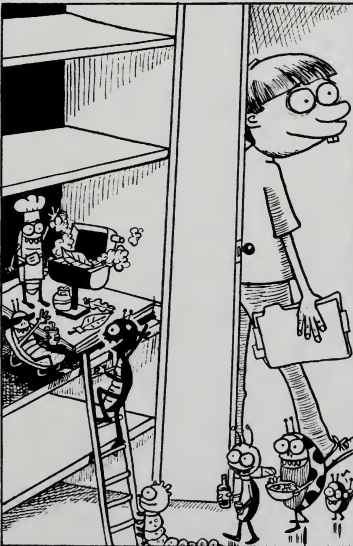
Use the carts and shelves

When studying specimens at the cabinets, place the folders on the pull-out shelves or on a Herbarium cart. Remove the specimen sheets one by one. Don't flip through them.



Keep compactor aisles free

If the Herbarium has compactors, open the aisles as wide as possible. Give yourself space. Don't leave specimens unattended as the aisles could be closed and the specimens crunched.



Close the door

Don't leave cabinets open unnecessarily; insect pests may get in.

Moving Specimens

One at a time

Do not remove and carry more than one shelf of specimens at a time. Don't be rough with them. Don't drop them. Use a Herbarium cart to transport specimens, with the specimens on the cart shelves and not on top where they might fall off.



Handling Specimens

Keep it clean

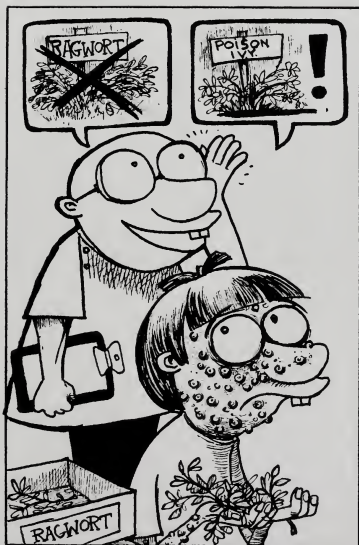
Use two hands when handling specimen sheets. Don't let them bend or flex. Don't make a messy pile of them. Don't put books or notepads or anything else on top of them. And don't leave them out unnecessarily long.





Leave specimens and specimen sheets intact

Do not remove specimens from the Collection Room without permission from the Collection Manager. Do not remove any part of a specimen without permission from the Collection Manager. If you find a broken fragment, notify the Collection Manager.



No graffiti, please

Do not write on specimen sheets or labels. If a specimen is incorrectly identified, notify the Collection Manager.



Get permission

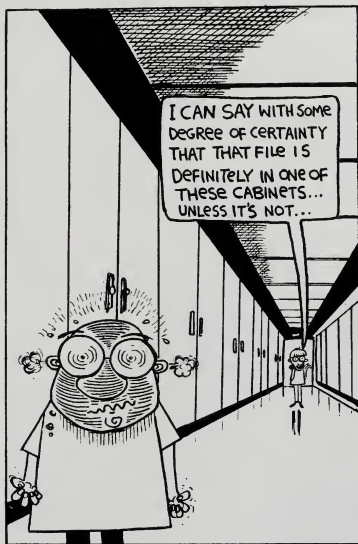
If you want to photocopy specimens, check first with the Collection Manager.



Putting Specimens Away

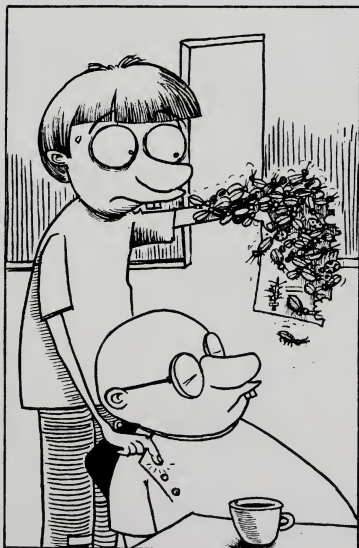
Go easy

When putting specimens away, open the folder and place the specimen sheet neatly on top of the pile. Never insert a specimen sheet into the stack.



Be meticulous

Replace specimens in their proper folders and the folders in their proper cabinets. Misfiled specimens are as good as lost.



Look out for bugs

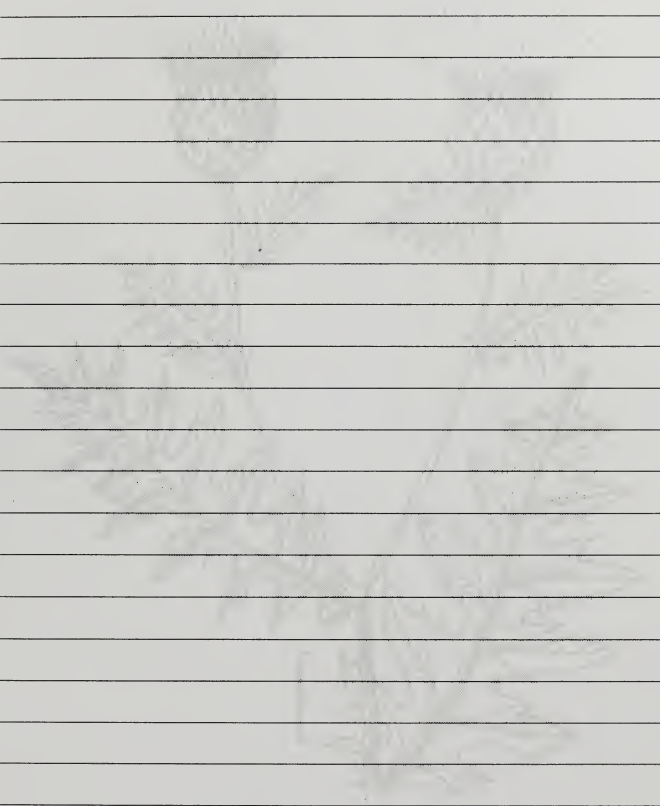
Do not replace specimens that have live insects or insect debris on them. Notify the Collection Manager.



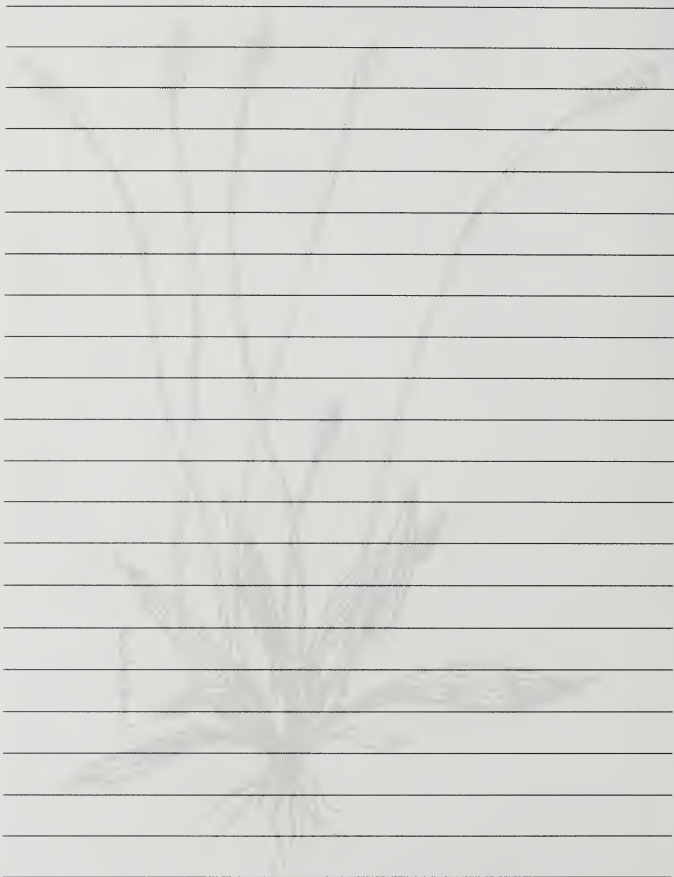
Remember...

The Herbarium must be used to be valuable. But it must be used correctly or its value is lost.

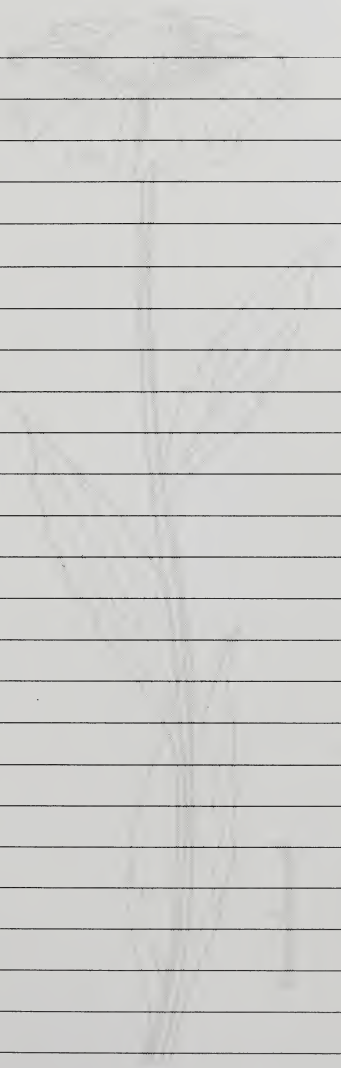
Notes



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About the authors

Mike Shchepanek is the Chief Collection Manager at the Canadian Museum of Nature's Herbarium. He has been building and caring for the collection for over 30 years.

Rob Waller is the Chief of Conservation at the Canadian Museum of Nature. He is a member of the Canadian Association of Professional Conservators and a fellow of the International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works. He has spent 25 years evaluating risks to collections and guarding Canada's national collection from all kinds of dangerous pests.

How to order copies of *Herbarium Rules!*

Herbarium Managers! Finally, an instructive booklet that gently, and with a touch of humor, reminds your visitors to go easy on the specimens. To order copies of *Herbarium Rules!* (customized with your institution's logo, introductory text and contact numbers) call the Publishing Division of the Canadian Museum of Nature at (613) 566-4292, fax (613) 566-4763, email rmartin@mus-nature.ca.

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To make an appointment to visit the Herbarium at the Canadian Museum of Nature, call (613) 364-4076 or fax (613) 364-4027.

For Museum general information call (613) 566-4700 or visit the Museum's website at www.nature.ca

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